

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-13, 15, and 19-47, and add new claims 48 - 67, as follows:

1 - 47. Canceled.

48. (New) A machine for preparing and dispensing documents relating to financial transactions, said machine comprising:

- (a) a document dispenser, said dispenser having a housing;
- (b) a manually operable input unit for input of data and operating commands, said input unit being external to and coupled through said dispenser housing;
- (c) a document printer unit for printing readable information, including a monetary value, on document forms based on data inputted at said input unit, wherein said document printer unit is contained entirely within said dispenser housing and comprises:

a document form storage receptacle for holding the document forms prior to being printed;

a printer for printing the readable information on the documents to produce completed documents;

a feed mechanism for feeding the document forms in succession from said receptacle to said printer and for dispensing said completed documents; and

an optical reader for reading barcode information on said document forms, said reader being operative to verify proper functioning of said printer unit by reading a barcode that is printed on said document forms by said printer inside the dispenser prior to dispensing;

- (d) an internal control unit, wherein said control unit is contained entirely within said dispenser housing and is directly electrically coupled to said input unit and said printer unit for controlling operation of said printer unit in response to data and commands inputted at said input unit, and wherein the control unit comprises:

a central processing unit containing a microprocessor operable in response to program instructions;

input/output means connected for receiving the data and operating commands inputted at said input unit and for supplying data and control signals to said printer unit; and

memory means for storing the program instructions for said microprocessor and for receiving and storing data received by said input/output means from said input unit and representing at least the monetary value of each document, as well as data received by said input/output means from said optical reader for the same document;

- (e) a communication interface for conducting communications with an off-site central location remote from said dispenser and operative to transmit the data stored in said memory means to said central location; and

- (f) a time keeping device,

wherein said dispenser is a stand-alone, self-contained dispenser, said control unit is operative to receive authorization instructions from the central location via said interface, and said control unit is operative under control of said time keeping device for blocking dispensing of printed documents when no transmission of the data stored in said memory means to the central location has occurred for a predetermined period of time or when reception of an authorization instruction from the central location has not occurred for a predetermined period of time.

49. (New) The machine according to claim 48, wherein:

said printer comprises a print head for dispensing ink to form the printed information on the document forms;

said print head is mounted in said printer for movement in a scanning direction while dispensing the ink;

the scanning direction is transverse to the feed direction; and

said optical reader is mounted for movement with said print head.

50. (New) The machine according to claim 49, wherein said printer contains a supply of magnetic ink to be dispensed by said print head.

51. (New) The machine according to claim 48 in combination with a plurality of the document forms held in said receptacle, and wherein each of the document forms is a preprinted form provided with information uniquely identifying that document.

52. (New) The machine according to claim 51, wherein the information uniquely identifying each document is in the form of a bar code.

53. (New) The machine according to claim 48 in combination with a plurality of the document forms held in said receptacle, and wherein each of said document forms is a blank form and said printer contains a supply of magnetic ink to be used in printing on said documents.

54. (New) The machine according to claim 48, wherein said input unit comprises a data reader for reading data stored in machine readable form on a data storage medium.

55. (New) The machine according to claim 48, wherein the data stored in said memory means further includes the cumulative monetary value of a succession of documents.

56. (New) The machine according to claim 55, wherein said control unit is operative to block dispensing of printed documents when said cumulative monetary value exceeds a predetermined value and an authorization instruction to dispense further printed documents has not been received by said control unit.

57. (New) The machine according to claim 48, wherein the input unit includes a keyboard in operable communication with the machine.

58. (New) The machine according to claim 57, wherein said keyboard is a standard personal computer keyboard and is directly electrically connected to said control unit.

59. (New) A method for preparing and dispensing documents relating to financial transactions, said method comprising:

providing a machine comprising:

- (a) a stand-alone, self-contained document dispenser, said dispenser having a housing;
- (b) a manually operable input unit for input of data and operating commands, said input unit being external to and coupled through said dispenser housing;
- (c) a document printer unit for printing readable information, including a monetary value, on document forms based on data inputted at said input unit, wherein said document printer unit is contained entirely within said dispenser housing and comprises:

a document form storage receptacle for holding the document forms prior to being printed;

a printer for printing the readable information on the documents to produce completed documents;

a feed mechanism for feeding the document forms in succession from said receptacle to said printer and for dispensing said completed documents; and

an optical reader for reading barcode information on said document forms, said reader being operative to verify proper functioning of said printer unit by reading a barcode that is printed on said document forms by said printer inside the dispenser prior to dispensing;

- (d) an internal control unit, wherein said control unit is contained entirely within said dispenser housing and is directly electrically coupled to said input unit and said printer unit for controlling operation of said printer unit in response to data and commands inputted at said input unit, and wherein the control unit comprises:

a central processing unit containing a microprocessor operable in response to program instructions;

input/output means connected for receiving the data and operating commands inputted at said input unit and for supplying data and control signals to said printer unit; and

memory means for storing the program instructions for said microprocessor and for receiving and storing data received by said input/output means from said input unit and representing at least the monetary value of each document, as well as data received by said input/output means from said optical reader for the same document;

- (e) a communication interface for conducting communications with an off-site central location remote from said dispenser and operative to transmit the data stored in said memory means to said central location; and
- (f) a time keeping device;

inputting data and operating commands via said input unit;

feeding a succession of document forms from said storage receptacle to said document printer and printing readable information on each successive document form, the readable information assigning a monetary value to the document form based on data inputted at the input unit;

storing data representing the monetary value of each document and the cumulative monetary value of a succession of documents in said memory means;

establishing communication between said off-site central location and said communication interface;

periodically transmitting the data stored in the memory means to the central location;

periodically transmitting authorization instructions from the central location to the communication interface; and

blocking dispensing of printed documents when no transmission of the data stored in said memory to the central location has occurred for a predetermined period of time or when reception of an authorization instruction from the central location has not occurred for a predetermined period of time.

60. (New) The method according to claim 59, wherein dispensing of printed documents is blocked when the cumulative monetary value exceeds a predetermined value and an authorization instruction to dispense further printed documents has not been received from the central location.

61. (New) The method according to claim 59, further including printing a barcode on each document while inside the dispenser and reading the barcode with said optical reader prior to dispensing.

62. (New) A method for preparing and dispensing documents relating to financial transactions, said method comprising:

providing a machine comprising:

- (a) a stand-alone, self-contained document dispenser, said dispenser having a housing;
- (b) a manually operable input unit for input of data and operating commands, said input unit being external to and coupled through said dispenser housing;
- (c) a document printer unit for printing readable information, including a monetary value, on document forms based on data inputted at said input unit, wherein said document printer unit is contained entirely within said dispenser housing and comprises:

a document form storage receptacle for holding the document forms prior to being printed;

a printer for printing the readable information on the documents to produce completed documents;

a feed mechanism for feeding the document forms in succession from said receptacle to said printer and for dispensing said completed documents; and

an optical reader for reading barcode information on said document forms, said reader being operative to verify proper functioning of said printer unit by reading a barcode that is printed on said

document forms by said printer inside the dispenser prior to dispensing;

- (d) an internal control unit, wherein said control unit is contained entirely within said dispenser housing and is directly electrically coupled to said input unit and said printer unit for controlling operation of said printer unit in response to data and commands inputted at said input unit, and wherein the control unit comprises:

a central processing unit containing a microprocessor operable in response to program instructions;

input/output means connected for receiving the data and operating commands inputted at said input unit and for supplying data and control signals to said printer unit; and

memory means for storing the program instructions for said microprocessor and for receiving and storing data received by said input/output means from said input unit and representing at least the monetary value of each document, as well as data received by said input/output means from said optical reader for the same document;

- (e) a communication interface for conducting communications with an off-site central location remote from said dispenser and operative to transmit the data stored in said memory means to said central location; and

- (f) a time keeping device;

inputting data and operating commands via said input unit;

providing a plurality of document forms each printed with a bar code;



feeding a succession of document forms from the document form storage receptacle to the document printer and printing readable information on each successive document form based on data inputted at the input unit;

reading the bar code on each document form with said optical reader when the form is in the printer; and

dispensing each form, after printing, from the document printer.

63. (New) The method according to claim 62, further comprising:

storing in said memory means data representing the monetary value of each document as well as information read by said optical reader for the same document;

establishing communication between said off-site central location and said communication interface; and

transmitting the data stored in the memory means to the central location.

64. (New) The method according to claim 62, wherein said readable information is printed on said document forms in the printer with magnetic ink.

65. (New) The method according to claim 62, further including printing a second barcode on each document while inside the dispenser and reading the second barcode with said optical reader prior to dispensing.

66. (New) The method according to claim 65, further comprising:

storing in said memory means data representing the monetary value of each document as well as information read by said optical reader for the same document;

establishing communication between said off-site central location and said communication interface; and

transmitting the data stored in the memory means to the central location.

67. (New) A method for preparing and dispensing documents relating to financial transactions, said method comprising:

providing a machine comprising:

- (a) a stand-alone, self-contained document dispenser, said dispenser having a housing;
- (b) a manually operable input unit for input of data and operating commands, said input unit being external to and coupled through said dispenser housing;
- (c) a document printer unit for printing readable information, including a monetary value, on document forms based on data inputted at said input unit, wherein said document printer unit is contained entirely within said dispenser housing and comprises:

a document form storage receptacle for holding the document forms prior to being printed;

a printer for printing the readable information on the documents to produce completed documents;

a feed mechanism for feeding the document forms in succession from said receptacle to said printer and for dispensing said completed documents; and

an optical reader for reading barcode information on said document forms, said reader being operative to verify proper functioning of said printer unit by reading a barcode that is printed on said document forms by said printer inside the dispenser prior to dispensing;

- (d) an internal control unit, wherein said control unit is contained entirely within said dispenser housing and is directly electrically coupled to said input unit and said printer unit for controlling operation of said printer unit in response to data and commands inputted at said input unit, and wherein the control unit comprises:

a central processing unit containing a microprocessor operable in response to program instructions;

input/output means connected for receiving the data and operating commands inputted at said input unit and for supplying data and control signals to said printer unit; and

memory means for storing the program instructions for said microprocessor and for receiving and storing data received by said input/output means from said input unit and representing at least the monetary value of each document, as well as data received by said input/output means from said optical reader for the same document;

- (e) a communication interface for conducting communications with an off-site central location remote from said dispenser and operative to transmit the data stored in said memory means to said central location; and

- (f) a time keeping device;

inputting data and operating commands via said input unit;

reading data stored in machine readable form on a data storage medium in a data reader forming part of the input unit;

feeding a succession of document forms from said storage receptacle to said document printer and printing readable information on each successive document form based on data inputted at the input unit and data read in the data reader; and

dispensing each form, after printing, from the document printer.